

DDS EMPLOYEE NEWS

Governor M. Jodi Rell

Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara

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Congratulations Graduates!



Frank Nahlik and Commissioner O'Meara

Commencement Ceremonies for the Abuse and Neglect Investigator Training took place on February 28, 2008 at the Department of Public Safety Forensic Laboratory in Meriden, CT.

Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara presented the candidates with their certificates with the support of Captain Michael Woodson, Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Director of Investigations, Mark Dysart, Special Investigative Assistant; and Nancy McClure, Special Investigator. Participants attended a three-day intensive program. Topics included: Investigations Statutes and Policies Overview, The Interview Process, Preparing for and Conducting an Investigation, and Completing an Investigative Report.

Special thanks to DDS Division of Investigations staff for delivering such an exciting program! DDS instructors included: Captain Michael Woodson, Director; Kendres Lally, Lead Investigator; Marlene Fein, Lead Investigator; Kevin Macnamara, Lead Investigator; Leigh Ann Torres, Lead Investigator; Thomas Habib, Lead Special Investigator; Robert Moylan, Lead Special Investigator; Joseph Innamorato, Lead Special Investigator; Greg Brigandi, Lead Special Investigator; Sandy Barbieri, Nurse Investigator; Nancy McClure, Special Investigator; and Mark Dysart, Special Investigative Assistant.

Candidates for the Abuse and Neglect Investigator Training

New investigators included participants from both the private and public sectors of Connecticut along with Mr. Frank Nahlik, Director of Investigations and Enforcement, Washington, D.C.



Participants included:

Susan Paul, Dawne Recinos, Karla Nation, Darrin Bond, Debbie Mattias, Amy Helie, Leonard Cipollone, Cee Cee Fassbender, all from DDS South Region; Karen Allen from DDS North Region; Sherry Young from Resources for Human Development; Desiree Perez and Julie Cirrito from Mosaic; Brian Kukevich from Turning Leaf Agency; Shanique Fenlator from Catholic Family Services; Robert Heller from Community

Options of CT; Lori La Salle from Sunrise Northeast; Mary Lou Verrette from Northeast Placement Services, Inc.; Shawn Ryan from CW Resources; Mary Moriarity from HARC; Claude McBeth from Alternatives, Inc.; Marie Farina from The Kennedy Center; Christine Granja from Easter Seals CT, Inc.; Tearsha Askew from Greenwich ARC; Chris Guman from Employment Options; Lisa Parille from STAR, Inc.; Susan Desrochers from Corporation for Public Management; Victoria LeVasseur from Family Options; Adrienne Demand from Continuum of Care, Inc.; Britta Trickey from New Foundations, Inc.; and Jonathan Lambert from Network, Inc.

North Region Black History Celebration



In recognition of Black History month, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) North Region Cultural Competency Committee recently held their annual celebration in East Hartford. The program featured guest speakers, music and catered food.

Organized by committee members Gerald Daley, Cathy Faulkner, Patricia West, Lateisha Griggs, Brigitta Rainey, Sean Charvis, Barbara Gardner, Diane Greene and Angela Dyall, the North Region conference room displayed African American History with photos and news articles featuring some of the people who overcame slavery, segregation and oppression to become inventors and fearless leaders in a

society that fought against their every belief, the most important being equality for all men and women regardless of color, race and religion. With standing room only, the days events began with Jack (Reggie) Robinson, DDS Case Manager, singing The Negro National Anthem, created by James Weldon Johnson. Margaret Steineger-Keyser, who was born and raised in South Africa was the first speaker. She enticed the audience with South African spiritual music that provided the victims of apartheid with strength and courage. The unity that held her down during her imprisonment in her battle to end apartheid was both emotional and heartfelt.

Rita Kelley, DDS Equal Opportunity Assurance Director, discussed our present day heroes who are often left out of our history, as well as her family and their struggle coming from Jamaica and settling in this country at a time when many people were often not only suffering from discrimination for being African American, but for being just different. She spoke of an incident that occurred in the 1940s in which a bank declined accepting her grandfather's money because he was black. Through Affirmative Action, Ms. Kelley, along with other Americans, were allowed to attend and graduate from colleges that once would not allow a person of color on their doorsteps. In addition, Ms. Kelley discussed the origin of Affirmative Action in Connecticut, how Affirmative Action affects all of us, and the importance of maintaining such a program.

Len Erazmus, DDS Equal Employment Opportunity Specialist, provided statistical information regarding diversity in the agency. He presented data showing how the number of employees in DDS has increased over the years. For example, in 1977 there were 337 people of color in the department and according to the most recent data for 2007, there are now 1,085 people of color employed by DDS.

Finally, Ann Marie Brunguard, founder and President of New Day Global, a firm specializing in diversity training and management consulting, spoke. Filled with energy and excitement she got the crowd up and on their toes with stories read by randomly selected readers. Connecticut's African American high school students wrote the stories about the negative impact people have had on them in the schools they attend. Ms. Brunguard discussed ways of helping victims and witnesses of hate crimes cope.

After the program, participants shared a soul food lunch of fried chicken, macaroni and cheese, greens, yams and the traditional corn bread, catered by a local Hartford Restaurant.



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